

ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYS



Forestry

Commercial forests are dynamic, constantly changing through both human and natural activity. The forestry assessment will describe the changes to the forest structure resulting from the incorporation of the Proposed Varied Development into the forests, in particular the loss of woodland area and will follow the same methodology used for the Consented Development. Key to this will be the integration of the Proposed Varied Development into the forest structure to minimise the loss of woodland area and to prevent fragmentation of the remaining woodland.

Ecology and Ornithology

The scope of the ecological assessment was determined through a combination of desk study to identify existing biological data relating to the Site and surrounding area, baseline surveys, and consultation with relevant nature conservation organisations and stakeholders. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the Site has been undertaken to classify and map natural and semi natural habitats, as well as identify habitat suitable to support protected species. In addition, specific surveys have been undertaken for a range of protected species within and up to 250m of the Site.

NatureScot agreed with the ornithology assessment that the Consented Development was predicted to have no significant effects on ornithology.

The change in design between the Consented Development and the Proposed Varied Development is not predicted to produce a significantly different impact on ecological or ornithological receptors and is likely to result in a reduction of impacts.

The Proposed Varied Development proposals will incorporate greater areas dedicated to biodiversity enhancement compared to the Consented Development. These are likely to include areas of 'forest to bog' peatland restoration on the western edge of the site.

This part of the site has been chosen because this is where the peat is already relatively deep, and the existing rate of forestry growth is relatively slow. The biodiversity enhancement proposals will also include native planting along watercourse corridors.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

The archaeological and cultural heritage assessment has considered the potential physical impacts related to construction of the Proposed Varied Development on heritage assets, and operational impacts on the setting of cultural heritage features.

All known non-designated heritage assets within the site boundary have been avoided by the Proposed Varied Development infrastructure by design, other than a boundary wall which would be subject to a direct physical impact during the construction phase at a single location.

There is a scheduled monument, Craigengillan Cairn, within the northern part of the site. Views from the cairn to the south east down the Upper Ken Valley are a key part of the setting of this feature. Compared to the Consented Development, no additional infrastructure is proposed to encroach any further into this visibility splay with the Proposed Varied Development. In addition, three of nearest turbines in the Consented Development to the east and north of the cairn have been removed from the layout of the Proposed Varied Development.

Whilst adverse impacts upon the cultural significance of heritage assets within and surrounding the site are assessed as likely to remain with the variation scheme, the impacts are not increased in comparison with the Consented Development